

Milestone housing project for Wellington Housing Trust

In February 2009 the opening of a new six-unit community housing project in the Wellington suburb of Newtown was a dream realised for the Wellington Housing Trust.

Completion of the project was a milestone, "not only for the organisation but also for Wellington city," said Alison Cadman, Trust Director.

The opening ceremony was marked with a karakia, the planting of a kowhai tree in the courtyard and a speech from Community and Voluntary Sector Minister, the Hon Tariana Turia.

The event was attended by members of the Trust, Housing New Zealand Chief Executive Dr Lesley McTurk, supporters from the community housing and social services sector and those who made the project a reality, from architects and builders to bankers and accountants.

The \$2 million project has been made possible through funding from the government's Housing Innovation Fund (HIF; administered by HousingNZ). The units, designed by Rod Macdiarmid of Pelorus Architects, consist of two each of two-bedroom, three-bedroom and four-bedroom units, which are built to run as economically and health-efficiently as possible, with double-glazed windows, heat pumps, anti-allergenic carpet and effective insulation.

The Trust worked closely with other agencies over the two four-bedroom units which were built specifically to cater for larger migrant families. "There is a chronic shortage of this type of housing," said Alison. "We had 12 families that needed homes

of four bedrooms, but sadly we only had two available". She said it was exciting to watch the families move into their new homes. "Most of them just can't believe it. They're overwhelmed really. You can see the difference it's made to them before they've even moved in".

Alison called on the government to give more support to the community housing sector and organisations like the Trust so they can provide housing on a larger scale and meet the increasing housing needs in Wellington and nationally. "The bulk of the funding we received was a loan so it will be paid back to government. We don't believe government could get 6 new social housing units cheaper than using this model. In this economic climate the government could be injecting more money into the housing and construction sector by simply lending more money to groups like ours. Yet HIF is only proposed to be \$20million from 1 July."

In its media release celebrating the opening of the units, Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) said the project was a prime example of "what it means to make a commitment to building for the future", adding that "the lesson in this is that we need to continue to build the capabilities of organisations such as the Trust". CHA described the Trust as "meeting an undervalued need to house our communities in housing that isn't privately owned and that isn't State housing".

The Trust is New Zealand's oldest community based housing group - for more information about the Trust visit www.wht.org.nz



Architect Rod Macdiarmid with Wellington Housing Trust's Director Alison Cadman outside the new units.



Wellington Housing Trustees and staff above, and supporters below at the opening. Pictured above are Janice Hill, at front, and from left to right: Peter Jones, Don Borrie, Paul Scholey, Clare Aspinall, Jon Holmes and Alison Cadman with Rod Macdiarmid.

